



Testimony on House Bill 5764

Submitted by Joe Horvath, Assistant Policy Director

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Good morning. I would first like to thank the committee for taking this testimony. My name is Joe Horvath. I am the assistant policy director at the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, a Connecticut-based free market think tank. I am submitting testimony in support of House Bill 5764.

As a state, Connecticut is remarkable for two reasons, one good and one bad. The “good” is our dedication to criminal justice reform, decriminalization, and doing what we can to reduce recidivism and ensure a fair second chance to former inmates. The “bad” is that since 1990, this state has the nation’s slowest rate of job growth.

Bills like HB 5764 touch an important intersection of jobs and justice, and, in concept, admirably serves both goals. In fact, the Yankee Institute largely supports any occupational licensing reforms that eliminate unnecessary restrictions on released offenders. Absent a legitimate public safety concern, it is generally good policy to make sure the formerly incarcerated are afforded a fair shot at re-entry.

The Department of Corrections offers educational and vocational training to help rehabilitate current inmates and boost the odds of successful re-entry once they are released. It is simply illogical to, either by statute or through the discretion of licensing boards, undercut the state’s own work to that end.

This bill is good policy, but I would advise the committee to consider expanding beyond just barbers and hairdressers.